

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

the world to His apostles, He had revealed it to the Abbot Joachim, in order that men might be ready for it, now that it was at hand. He interprets a prophecy ascribed to the Abbot as meaning that after Urban VI—"Papa Urbano che fa tanti miracoli"—will come a Gregory, who is to be the last Pope, after whom will come Antichrist, whom some say will be Pope : " Thou art young and wilt probably see all these things, if thou livest to the normal age."¹

Nevertheless, the new year, 1379, opened well for the Urbanist cause. England had declared emphatically for the Roman claimant; the King of the Romans was treading in his father's steps ; Louis of Hungary and Poland, the chief arbiter of war and peace in eastern Europe, gave hopes of armed intervention. On January i, Catherine, who had already forgiven William Flete (perhaps in consideration of his letters to his own countrymen), wrote to Pietro di Giovanni Ventura and Stefano Maconi : " Through the sweet goodness of God, Holy Church and Pope Urban VI have in these days received the most satisfactory news that they have had for a long time. I send you with this a letter addressed to the Bachelor, in which you can see how God is beginning to pour out His grace upon His sweet Spouse. And so I hope in His mercy that He will continue, multiplying His gifts day by day. I know that His truth cannot lie ; He has promised to reform her by much endurance on the part of His servants, and by means of their humble and continuous prayers, offered up with tears and travail." ²

In Siena itself, the government and populace alike had unhesitatingly declared from the outset for Urban, who had sent Jacomo di Sozzino Tolomei, the Bishop of Narni, as his nuncio to the city. "As to the Holy Father," wrote Cristofano Guidini to Neri di Landoccio, " I do not believe that there is a single man in Siena who does not hold and believe that Pope Urban is the true pastor of Holy Church, and if any ambassadors of the

¹ *Lettere cit.*, 27. Cf. *Anonimo Florentine*, pp. 389, 390.

^a Letter 332 (264).